

Contributions

THE DRESS QUESTION

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In discussing this question we reach the point of church authority. We have but two classes to deal with, and they differ, not so much in the principle involved, but in its application. The one class believes that the church is vested with power to make and enforce rules, the other denies such right or authority.

I wish to give a few reasons why I believe that such authority is not given to the church.

1. Christ says, (Matt. 28: 18) "*All authority is given unto me.*" Shall we dispute what Christ himself so plainly says? If he really has *all* authority "in earth" as well as in heaven, where does church authority come from?

2. Again He says, (John 10: 9) "*I am the door.*" Thousands have knocked at this door who have been turned away because they were told—"we have a law"—certain church rules—thru which you must enter, therefore ecclesiastical decisions become the door instead of Christ.

3. Hear Christ again, (John 7: 24) "*Judge not according to the appearance.*" Require a prescribed form of dress, and you violate this divine rule and contradict the words of Jesus. See also I Sam. 16: 7.

4. Christ charged the Pharisees with "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." Matt. 15: 9. Make a certain form of dress a test of fellowship, or church membership, and you place human authority on a level with the divine, and thus teach for doctrine the commandments of men. It is an awful thing to refuse to fellowship those who are willing to follow the "truth as it is in Jesus," because they refuse to accept man-made rules.

5. Resort to an established order of dress authorized by any ecclesiastical body and you set up a standard that is foreign to the economy of grace as revealed in the gospel. We are no longer under law, but under grace. Rom. 6: 14. Our service is in "newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." Rom. 7: 6.

We have been called into liberty, (Gal. 5: 13) and by love render service both to God and man, because we live in the spirit, (Gal. 5: 25) and therefore walk in the spirit, having already crucified the old man, the carnal nature. Rom. 6: 6.

6. To formulate rules of our own and make them a test of fellowship is to not "stand fast" in the liberty of Christ, (Gal. 5: 1) but to become entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Thousands are still groaning under the same yoke of bondage, some consciously, others unconsciously. Many still

desire rather to make a "fair shew in the flesh," (Gal. 6: 22)—be loyal to ecclesiastical ruling, gospel or ungospel—that they may escape persecution from that power misnamed "*the church*," rather than to suffer the loss of all things, (Phil. 3: 8) in order to win Christ who made himself of no reputation, (Phil. 2: 7) not even choosing to please his own brethren, yea, not even himself, in order that he might please the Father who sent him.

Many other reasons might be given in favor of the position we hold on this question, but these must suffice for the present.

Let us next notice some arguments (?) urged by those who teach differently:

1. "We are to let our light shine." Very true, but Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Peter knew the Lord's teaching on this, therefore, he writes and emphasizes the importance of that inward adorning, "even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." I Pet. 3: 4. He seemed to foresee that in the time to come there would be those who would teach the essentiality of certain outward adorning, and therefore he emphatically says, "*Let it not be*" of that kind.

2. "It is a means to an end, and that end *gospel plainness*." Cannot the wearer be filled with what some people call spiritual pride and be proud of his or her *plainness*?

Does law make dishonest people honest? Besides if it is a "means to an end," etc, and that end has always proved a desperate failure as history demonstrates is it not time to search for a better "means"—a "better way"—a "more excellent way?"

The Methodists tried it and failed and all other religious bodies that have adopted the same method have either failed most signally, or they are fast bordering on defeat. Rather a poor argument then for its adoption. Time to cast about for something that does not fail. Why not adopt the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation, (Rom. 1: 16) if we believe it, but if we disbelieve it and undertake to improve on it by adopting man-made measures, we lose the power of God and end in failure and confusion. Why not return to pentecostal belief and practice? What a time Peter would have had getting those three thousand new converts from all parts of the world into the church the same day, if he had been obliged to have placed the "order of the church" before them all and received their individual recognition and acceptance, etc. A *believed* gospel is the *power* of God. No failures on that line. Let us believe it then so that we do not need to add anything to it, for that leads to even worse than failure. Rev. 22: 18.

But my article is already too lengthy,

and yet I dare not close without throwing out this "*clincher*."

I know that we are often represented as teaching worldliness in dress, etc. This is a false charge undoubtedly.

I do not teach it. I do not believe that any of our ministers teach it. But this is what we do teach: That salvation is thro Christ and him alone. When he saves his word is all we need. If we do not have His salvation, no ecclesiastical body on earth can help us. Rev. 3: 7. Amen and amen.

GOD IN GOVERNMENT

MRS. D. B. ZOOK

This subject having been assigned me without any knowledge of it until published in the program, I do not know whether the committee had in view any special line of thought relating to the subject, and therefore, have followed what suggested itself to me.

First. Civil government is an institution ordained of God and recognized by him as a means of accomplishing his purposes in the salvation of the world, the spread of the gospel, and the peaceable and happy relations of mankind.

God's idea of government as revealed in his word is the "theocracy," that is a government dictated by himself thro one individual chosen for that purpose as the medium of communication of his will and desire. As we see in the selection of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in succession, in Moses, leading his people, followed by Joshua and then fifteen Judges for the period of some 450 years.

Coming down to Saul, when the "theocracy" was turned into a monarchy, not by direction of God but against his will and advice.

But while God's chosen form of government is the theocracy he has never confined himself exclusively to that form of civil government, but has wrought in and thro all forms of recognized civil government.

May we not suppose that in the course of time, when the civilization of the world had risen sufficiently high that the design of God was a change from the "theocracy" to a "democracy" that is a government where people govern themselves under regulations and restraints; which seems but a legitimate evolution drawn from the family relations where the children are placed under the government of the parent, until they have reached a stage of development and knowledge, when they go out for themselves, and are as it were their own rulers.

But a "democracy," pure and simple, being burdensome in cases where government reaches over a large territory and a large population, from the fact that not all can come together in one place at the same time, we have the modified form of the "democracy." The